

Early Childhood Education Cabinet Meeting

May 26, 2011 • 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

State Department of Education

SERC Classroom

25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown

ATTENDANCE

John Rathgeber Chairperson, CBIA	Chair, Representative of Business or Philanthropic Community	X	Elaine Flynn-York (for Patricia Rehmner) Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services	Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Designee	X
Catherine Abercrombie Representative	Member of the House of Representatives		Kevin Sullivan Dept. of Public Health	Representative of State Agency responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	X
Peter Palermino (for Claudette Beaulieu) Dept. of Social Services	Representative from State Agency Responsible for Child Care	X	Senator Andrea Stillman State Senator	Member of the State Senate	
Marisol Estrada-Soto Parent	Parent of child attending school in Priority District		David Title Superintendent, Fairfield Public Schools	Representative of the Local Education Agency	
Harriet Feldlaufer Dept. of Education	Representative of the State Education Agency	X	Maria Synodi (for Anne Louise Thompson) Dept. of Education	Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Programs under 619 or Part C of the IDEA	X
Linda Goodman Dept. of Developmental Services	Representative of Entity Determined Relevant by the Governor	X	Eileen Ward Director, Children's Community Development Center	Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education	X
Kathy Guay Director, Office of Policy & Management	Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management Designee		Grace Whitney Head Start Collaboration Officer	State Director of Head Start Collaboration	X
Joan Parris Director, Early Childhood Education, Norwalk CC	Representative of Institutions of Higher Education		Elaine Zimmerman Executive Director, Commission on Children	Executive Director of the Commission on Children	X
Vacant	Representative from Head Start Agency				

Documents Received:

The following documents were distributed:

- Minutes from the March 24, 2011 meeting
- Website Hosting Cost and Feature Comparison
- Summary Report of Work Group Chair Orientation – May 6, 2011

A. Welcome and Introductions

John Rathgeber opened the meeting at 9:35 A.M.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the March 24, 2011 meeting were approved with revisions.

C. New Project Director / Co-Chair Orientation with Karen Ray

John Rathgeber welcomed Sherry Linton-Massiah as the Cabinet's new Project Director. Ms. Linton-Massiah will be working the co-chairs and committees of the four priority area work groups. Ms. Linton-Massiah reported that she has met with the co-chairs of the work groups to review the work plans and begun the recruitment of work group members.

John Rathgeber stated that there will be an objective process for selecting the work group team members and highlighted the membership criteria agreed to at the May 6 orientation meeting with Karen Ray. Criteria are:

- a. Members represent organizations and have direct access to decision-makers/senior leaders of their organization.
- b. Members have specific expertise/knowledge.
- c. Members have credibility with stakeholders.
- d. Members have the authority to change their organization.
- e. Organizations are represented that will be impacted by decisions.
- f. Members represent a broad range of views.
- g. Work group members are limited to 8-12 individuals.
- h. Vendors cannot be members.

Mr. Rathgeber reported that the leadership team has begun to draft a document outlining decision-making processes, including fiscal requests made by the work groups. At the next leadership team meeting, co-chairs will be asked to discuss their recommendations for work group membership, finalize their work plans, and prepare budget requests to support their work.

D. Connecticut Data Collaborative

Robert Santy, president and CEO of CERC, and co-chair for the P-20 Council presented information on the Connecticut Data Collaborative. Mr. Santy stated that the work of the Connecticut Data Collaborative has mostly come out of the work of the previous Cabinet who received funding from a national data effort. The goal of the Council is to increase data sharing in the state. The Collaborative addresses data access and quality primarily in public policy development and program evaluation.

Mr. Santy's presentation on the Connecticut Data Collaborative can be found on the Cabinet's website (www.CTEarlyChildhood.org) within the May 26, 2011, meeting resource materials.

E. Legislative Updates

Sherry Linton-Massiah reported that Bill No. 1106 concerning the development of a Department of Early Education and Child Development now states that the Governor will appoint a planning director to the Office of Policy Management to plan for the establishment of a department of early care and education.

Harriet Feldlaufer reported on Bill No. 1103 concerning the membership of the Cabinet which includes that a parent, an individual from the Head Start Association, and an individual from the Department of Children and Families be appointed to the Cabinet.

Elaine Zimmerman reported that Bill No. 983 concerning children affected by disaster and terrorism was passed by the Senate and requires that the Commissioner of Emergency Management and Homeland Security develop disaster response plans that address the needs of children. Ms. Zimmerman explained that strategies must be in place for natural and unnatural disasters, including training in evacuations, how families reconnect, attention to children with special needs and hazard plans in school systems.

Ms. Zimmerman also reported on Bill No. 6432 concerning the closing of the achievement gap. Overall, Ms. Zimmerman stated that the bill has been well-received and is expected to be passed, however, the section regarding kindergarten age has been left in and will result in many poor children not having access to care because they would no longer be eligible for kindergarten. There has been much debate around this issue, and Ms. Zimmerman urged Cabinet members to keep a close eye on this bill as it moves through the legislature.

F. Website

The web-hosting for the Cabinet's website will expire on June 30, 2011. Handouts comparing the costs and features of the current Cabinet's web-hosting (Web Solutions), to a new web-hosting site were distributed to the Cabinet and can be found on the Cabinet's website (www.CTEarlyChildhood.org) within the May 26, 2011, meeting resource materials.

The Cabinet is currently paying \$540/year for web-hosting, with an additional \$90/year for the purchase of the domain name (.com, .net, .org). There is an additional cost of \$125 per hour for any changes to the site's structure. Overall feedback of the current website is that is very difficult to navigate, and is not user-friendly.

Alissa Marotta, an Educational Technology Specialist at the Department of Education, has designed a sample website through a new web-hosting company which significantly reduces the annual website costs from \$540/year (plus maintenance fees of \$125/hour) to approximately \$75/year. Features included with the new web-hosting site, not included in our current package with Web Solutions are: multiple-format videos, live audio streaming option, public forums for discussion purposes, password-protected pages, and built-in surveys. There are no additional costs for changes to the site's structure.

The Cabinet voted to move forward with the new hosting site on July 1, 2011. An issue of bookmarking was raised as many people have become familiar with the website's link. It was clarified that bookmarking will not be affected as the domain is purchased and will remain the same regardless of the web-hosting company.

There is approximately \$500 left in the website budget. Andrea Brinnel will contact CERC to discuss options for the use of these funds.

G. Child Care Development Fund Plan Updates – Peter Palermino

Peter Palermino updated the Cabinet on the status of the Child Care Development Fund Plan. Mr. Palermino stated that he had hoped to have the chairs of the work groups help draft the plan, but that there will still be time as the plan can be amended at any time. Over the last two months, three public hearings have taken place and a conference with All Our Kin was held. Over 100 day care providers were present which resulted in great dialogue and exchange of information. Parent Power and the RESC Early Childhood coordinators were called upon, as well.

Mr. Palermino met with Sherry Linton-Massiah and requested that she convene the work group chairs so that they can go through the plan and gain perspective on its importance. The plan will include goals that can realistically be put forward and adopted collectively.

H. Update on Work Groups

Elaine Zimmerman, co-chair of the Family Engagement/Home Visitation work group reported that her committee has already begun its work due to the reporting that must be complete as part of the federal grant application for home visitation programs. Peter Palermino, Linda Goodman, and Ms. Zimmerman have been part of a statewide team that has met weekly to create linkages between the Department of Public Health and the Cabinet. Ms. Zimmerman was pleased to report that through the team's think tank, opportunities including resources have unveiled themselves.

The grant proposal includes sites selected based on research found in the needs assessment conducted by the Department of Public Health that showed a range of vulnerability ranging from lack of transportation to very high abuse and substance abuse issues. Each site will need to choose its proven model of home visitation and will need to decide how they will work in an integrated manner. Quality standards, a focus on fatherhood, early language acquisition and literacy efforts have all been embedded into the proposal. Due to the immediate need for signature of approval for the grant application, the leadership team will be the entity to respond on behalf of the Cabinet.

Linda Goodman, co-chair of the Quality Data Systems work group reported that her team is working on their proposed group members and reminded the Cabinet that when the plan was initially written, there was uncertainty about funding, so activities (not goals or strategies) within the work plan will need to be modified. Ms. Goodman also stated that the work that is being done in the Connecticut Data Collaborative will be very beneficial towards meeting the goal of granting access for data to communities.

Harriet Feldlaufer, co-chair of the Early Learning Standards work group, reported that she has met with her co-chair, Dr. Dina Anselmi, and they are ready to bring their recommendations for work group members to the leadership team. Candidates were selected based on their experience and background in child development and learning birth through age 8. Ms. Feldlaufer stated that the work group will set a schedule to meet frequently throughout the summer. They are working to develop a charge for their committee for their first meeting, as recommended by Karen Ray. She is hopeful that her work group will develop a set of standards to vet with the other groups in the fall.

Sherry Linton-Massiah, on behalf of Joan Parris, co-chair of the Workforce/ Professional Development work group, reported that the team plans to meet with Malia Sieve from the Department of Higher Education to ensure they are involved.

I. Public Comment

Shelby Pons, Education Consultant for the Department of Education, reported on a grant that Connecticut received last August to support pregnant and parenting teens in five urban high schools. The grant funds are for two million dollars for each of the three years and were set aside to (1) hire a social worker, a part-time nurse, and a full-time home visitor for each high school; (2) provide services for 50 pregnant or parenting girls fathers in order to keep the parents in school and working towards a comprehensive high school graduation; (3) provide services for the babies including designation of licensed child care services; and (4) launch local advisory councils in each of the five districts and a statewide advisory council to ensure quality care is given. The first statewide conference will be held on Friday, June 3, 2011.

J. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM.

K. Next Meeting

The next Cabinet meeting will be held on June 30, 2011, at the State Office Building in Middletown, Room MCR3 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.